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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY
Seventh meeting
Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, 29 September – 3 October 2014
Item 12 of the provisional agenda*

RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT (ARTICLES 15 AND 16)

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its decision BS-VI/12, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol (COP-MOP) took note of the conclusions and recommendations of the open-ended online forum and the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Risk Assessment and Risk Management and commended the progress made on the resulting "Guidance on Risk Assessment of Living Modified Organisms", with the clear understanding that (a) the Guidance is not prescriptive and does not impose any obligations on Parties; and that (b) the Guidance would be tested nationally and regionally for further improvement in actual cases of risk assessment and in the context of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

2. In the same decision, the COP-MOP extended the Online Forum, and established a new AHTEG to serve until the seventh meeting of the Parties to the Protocol in accordance with the terms of reference annexed to the decision.

3. During the intersessional period, the Online Forum and AHTEG worked together and collaborated on a series of online discussions, enabling a large number of experts, nominated by Parties, other Governments and organizations and representing various scientific and technical fields relevant to risk assessment, to provide input towards the successful achievement of the three outcomes set out in decision BS-VI/12 in a cost-effective manner within the limited financial resources available.

4. This collaborative process between the Online Forum and AHTEG was concluded with one face-to-face meeting of AHTEG, which was held in Bonn, Germany, from 2 to 6 June 2014.

5. To facilitate the deliberations of the Parties, the reports and recommendations of the Online Forum and AHTEG are available as addenda to the present document.[1] The main outcomes of the Online Forum and AHTEG are also highlighted throughout the present document.

* UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/7/1.

6. The present note is meant to assist the COP-MOP in its consideration of the agenda item on risk assessment and risk management at its seventh meeting. In addition to the introduction, it is comprised of the following sections: (a) Section II provides an overview of the status of implementation of risk assessment and risk management provisions of the Protocol in line with operational objectives 1.3, 1.4 and 2.2 of the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety for the period 2011–2020; (b) Section III contains (i) a synthesis and the main outcomes of the process of testing the Guidance in actual cases of risk assessment and a possible way forward for updating the Guidance, and (ii) recommendations for improving the existing mechanism for updating background documents to the Guidance; (c) Section IV provides an overview of the development of a package aligning the Guidance and the Manual resulting in a graphic alignment between the Roadmap on Risk Assessment of Living Modified Organisms and the Manual as a tool that could facilitate capacity-building activities; (d) Section V outlines the process towards obtaining a recommendation on how to proceed with respect to the development of further guidance on specific topics of risk assessment, selected on the basis of the priorities and needs indicated by the Parties with a view to moving towards operational objectives 1.3 and 1.4 of the Strategic Plan and its outcomes and the recommendation; (e) Section VI provides an overview of a tool for facilitating the exchange of information regarding living modified organisms (LMOs) that may have or that are not likely to have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health; and (f) Section VII outlines possible elements for a draft decision for consideration by the Parties at their seventh meeting.

II. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT PROVISIONS

7. At their fifth meeting,[2] the Parties adopted the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which consists of a vision, a mission and five strategic objectives covering five focal areas. The focal areas, in order of priority, are intended to be implemented through a 10-year programme of work and contain several operational objectives each.

8. Three operational objectives within the Strategic Plan are of relevance to deliberations on risk assessment and risk management of living modified organisms:

(a) Operational objective 1.3 (Risk assessment and risk management): To further develop and support implementation of scientific tools on common approaches to risk assessment and risk management for Parties;

(b) Operational objective 1.4 (LMOs or traits that may have adverse effects): To develop modalities for cooperation and guidance in identifying LMOs or specific traits that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health;

(c) Operational objective 2.2 (Risk assessment and risk management): To enable Parties to evaluate, apply, share and carry out risk assessments and establish local science-based capacities to regulate, manage, monitor and control risks of LMOs.

9. In its decision BS-VI/12, paragraph 13, the COP-MOP requested the Executive Secretary to conduct an online survey on the status of the implementation of operational objectives 1.3, 1.4 and 2.2. Furthermore, in decision BS-V1/15, paragraph 3, the COP-MOP also requested the Executive Secretary to undertake a similar survey with a view to gathering information corresponding to all indicators in the Strategic Plan that could not be obtained from the second national reports or through other existing mechanisms and to review the information gathered through the survey and make the results available to the Parties before their seventh meeting.

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[1] Available as documents UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/7/10/Add.1 (Report of the Online Forum) and UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/7/10/Add.2 (Report of the AHTEG).

[2] Decision BS-V/16, annex I.

10. Accordingly, the Executive Secretary launched a survey through the BCH to generate the necessary information for measuring progress in the implementation of the Protocol. A total of 109 Parties took part in the survey.[3]

11. The Executive Secretary prepared an information document (UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/7/INF/5) containing an overview of the status of implementation of operational objectives 1.3, 1.4 and 2.2 of the Strategic Plan. Some of the emerging trends with regard to these operational objectives are:

(a) The majority (69%) of Parties that are developing countries or countries with economies in transition consider that the existing guidance on risk assessment and risk management is not sufficient. Several of these Parties noted that new guidance on specific topics of risk assessment and risk management is needed to keep abreast of rapid expansion in modern biotechnology. They identified gaps and needs related to the development of further guidance on specific topics of risk assessment;

(b) Many Parties, and in particular those that are developing countries or countries with economies in transition, indicated that, although they have trained personnel in risk assessment and/or risk management, the training was of short duration or at an introductory level and limited to a small number of recipients. Many Parties indicated a need for training and capacity-building activities on risk assessment and risk management of LMOs that are more in-depth and specifically designed for their needs;

(c) Challenges were encountered in measuring progress towards the operational objective related to LMOs or traits that may have adverse effects. Firstly, modalities for cooperation for the identification of such LMOs or traits have not yet been put in place. Secondly, among the Parties who reported having capacity to identify, assess and monitor LMOs or specific traits that may have adverse effects, many noted that their capacity is only limited and still inadequate, and noted that they lack trained personnel or laboratory facilities or both.

12. The results of the survey noted above give a snapshot of the current status of implementation of the Protocol's provisions on risk assessment and risk management. Parties may wish to take into account the results of the survey during the deliberations on the following sections of this note, as appropriate.

III. GUIDANCE ON RISK ASSESSMENT OF LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS

A. Testing of the Guidance

13. In decision BS-VI/12, the COP-MOP set out a process for testing the Guidance on Risk Assessment of LMOs, whereby it:

(a) Encouraged Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, as appropriate, to translate the Guidance into national languages and to make such translated versions available through the Biosafety Clearing-House for wide dissemination, in order to facilitate the testing of the Guidance at national, regional and subregional levels;

(b) Also encouraged Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, through their risk assessors and other experts who are actively involved in risk assessment, to test the Guidance in actual cases of risk assessment and share their experiences through the Biosafety Clearing-House and the open-ended online forum;

(c) Invited Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to provide financial and technical assistance to developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition to undertake, as appropriate, the testing activities referred to above.

14. In that same decision, the COP-MOP requested the Executive Secretary to:

(a) Develop appropriate tools to structure and focus the testing of the Guidance;

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[3] The results gathered through the survey are available at https://bch.cbd.int/database/reports/surveyonindicators.shtml.

(b) Gather and analyse, in a transparent manner, feedback provided as a result of testing on the practicality, usefulness and utility of the Guidance, (i) with respect to consistency with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety; and (ii) taking into account past and present experiences with living modified organisms; and

(c) Provide a report on possible improvements to the Guidance for consideration by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol at its seventh meeting.

15. In collaboration with the Online Forum and AHTEG, the Secretariat set out a process in response to the COP-MOP requests for the development of tools to structure the testing of the Guidance in actual cases of risk assessment, which was followed up by a 9-month period during which Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations conducted the testing of the Guidance.

16. A total of 56 submissions were made on the results of the testing of the Guidance from 43 Parties, 3 other Governments and 10 organizations. Among the submissions from Parties, 28 were from developing countries. An analysis of the results of the testing of the Guidance is available as an information document (UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/7/INF/3). A compilation of the suggestions for improvements is also available as an information document (UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/7/INF/4).[4]

17. A final round of online discussion was held in the Online Forum in April 2014 focusing on the analysis of the results of the testing of the Guidance with a view to providing an input to the face-to-face meeting of AHTEG, which was held in Bonn, Germany from 2 to 6 June 2014. The conclusions and recommendations emerging from that discussion are summarized in section III.A of document UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/7/10/Add.1.

18. During its face-to-face meeting, AHTEG considered the analysis of the results of the testing and proposals on possible ways forward on the issue emerging from the Online Forum, and noted, inter alia, that:

(a) The majority of Parties, in particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition, who participated in the testing of the Guidance concluded that the Guidance is useful, practical and consistent with the Protocol, and takes into account past and present experiences with LMOs;

(b) Many comments were provided during the testing of the Guidance for its further improvement.

19. On the basis of the above, with regard to the Guidance, AHTEG recommended the following:

(a) Endorsement of the Guidance, and support for its use and application, in its current version, in actual cases of risk assessment and as a tool for capacity-building activities in risk assessment;

(b) Formulation of questions regarding the use of the Guidance into the format of the third national report on the implementation of the Protocol, including suggestions for possible improvements;

(c) Establishment of a mechanism for updating the Guidance, having taken into account the notion that the Guidance is intended to be a "living document", with a view to presenting an updated version of the Guidance for consideration by the COP-MOP at its ninth meeting, as follows:

(i) After the seventh meeting of the COP-MOP, the Secretariat will group the original comments provided through the testing of the Guidance and, after the eighth meeting of the COP-MOP, the comments provided through the third national reporting system. The grouping will be done in the form of a matrix based on the following categories: statements that do not trigger changes; editorial and translational changes; suggestions for changes without a specified location in the Guidance; and suggestions for changes to specific sections of the Guidance (sorted by line numbers);

(ii) A subgroup of AHTEG composed of five members representing the Parties, taking into account regional and gender balance, will be formed to review the grouping of comments done by the Secretariat and to work on the suggestions for changes;

[4] All submissions in response to the testing of the Guidance are available online at http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/testing_guidance_RA.shtml.

(iii) The subgroup will streamline the comments by identifying which suggestions may be taken onboard and providing a justification for those suggestions that may not be taken onboard; it will also provide concrete text proposals for the suggestions to be taken onboard with a justification where the original suggestion was modified;

(iv) AHTEG will review all comments and suggestions with a view to presenting an updated version of the Guidance for consideration by the COP-MOP at its ninth meeting;

(v) A progress report will be submitted to the eighth meeting of the COP-MOP;

(d) Consideration, at its ninth meeting, of the need for a medium- or long-term mechanism for future updates of the Guidance.

B. Mechanism for updating the background documents to the Guidance

20. In its decision BS-VI/12, paragraph 6, the COP-MOP established a mechanism for regularly updating the list of background documents linked to the Guidance in a transparent manner, and mandated AHTEG to operate the mechanism and report to it at its seventh meeting.

21. At the face-to-face meeting of AHTEG, members shared their experiences in updating of the background materials to the Guidance and discussed the challenges encountered.

22. With a view to improving the existing mechanism based on the aforementioned experiences, the AHTEG recommended the following:

(a) The period for commenting on the background documents will be extended to three weeks and an automatic reminder could be sent after two weeks;

(b) The Secretariat could raise awareness of the background documents linked to the Guidance by, for example, adding information and links in the BCH and inviting experts in the specific topics of the Guidance to submit background documents;

(c) The Secretariat could improve the online-based workflow for background documents in such a way that the reviewing mechanism would only be triggered when changes made to a record affect how a document is linked to the Guidance;

(d) The background documents could be indexed for author affiliation (for example, government, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and business).

IV. CAPACITY-BUILDING IN RISK ASSESSMENT

23. In its decision BS-V/12, the COP-MOP welcomed the Training Manual on Risk Assessment of Living Modified Organisms (hereinafter the "Manual") developed by the Secretariat in collaboration with other international organizations following a request by the COP-MOP in its decision BS-IV/11. In the same decision, the COP-MOP requested the Executive Secretary to develop an interactive learning tool based on the Manual, and make it available through the BCH in all United Nations languages with the view to developing a more cost-effective way for delivering training on risk assessment.

24. In its decision BS-VI/12, the COP-MOP requested the Executive Secretary, among other things, in cooperation with the Online Forum and AHTEG to develop a package that aligns the Guidance (e.g. the Roadmap) with the Manual in a coherent and complementary manner, with the clear understanding that the Guidance was still being tested.

25. Between December 2012 and December 2013 both the Online Forum and AHTEG held seven rounds of online discussions focusing on how to best align the Guidance (e.g. the Roadmap) and the Manual.

26. During the online discussions, it emerged that the Roadmap and the Manual need to be aligned in such a way that the two documents would remain independent rather than being merged into a single document. Taking into account the fact that the Guidance, which comprises the Roadmap, was still being tested and the fact that the

COP-MOP may wish to establish a process for its update, the alignment between the contents of the Roadmap and the Manual was limited to revising and restructuring the Manual alone while keeping the Roadmap untouched throughout the process.

27. On the basis of several rounds of online discussions of the Online Forum and the AHTEG, the Secretariat prepared a draft "graphic alignment" of the Roadmap and the revised Manual which is available at http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_art15/training.shtml.

28. A final round of online discussions on the development of a package aligning the Roadmap and the Manual was held in April 2014, focusing on improvements to the draft graphic alignment. There was a general agreement that the graphic alignment of the Manual and the Roadmap is useful, clear, informative and well-designed and could be very useful as an online tool for capacity-building.

29. At its face-to-face meeting, AHTEG welcomed the alignment package between the Roadmap and the Manual in its graphic format and recommended the following to the COP-MOP at its seventh meeting:

(a) Endorsement of the package that aligns the Guidance and Manual as a useful online tool for, inter alia, capacity-building in risk assessment;

(b) Requesting to the Secretariat, subject to the availability of funds, to conduct capacity-building activities in risk assessment using the aligned package to facilitate the use and implementation of the Guidance, in its current version;

(c) Inviting the Global Environmental Facility, Parties, other Governments and international organizations to provide funds and in-kind assistance to implement the capacity-building activities in risk assessment.

V. DEVELOPMENT OF FURTHER GUIDANCE ON SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF RISK ASSESSMENT

30. In its decision BS-VI/12, the COP-MOP mandated the Online Forum and the AHTEG to provide a recommendation to its seventh meeting on how to proceed with respect to the development of further guidance on specific topics of risk assessment, selected on the basis of the priorities and needs indicated by the Parties with the view of moving toward operational objectives 1.3 and 1.4 of the Strategic Plan for the Cartagena Protocol and its outcomes.

31. An initial round of online discussions was held by both the Online Forum and AHTEG in February 2013 with a view to brainstorming on how to proceed with respect to the development of further guidance on specific topics of risk assessment, selected on the basis of the priorities and needs indicated by the Parties with the view of moving toward the operational objectives 1.3 and 1.4 of the Strategic Plan and its outcomes.[5]

32. A final round of online discussions on recommendations on how to proceed with respect to the development of further guidance on specific topics of risk assessment was held in February 2014. The views emerging from that discussion diverged on whether or not further guidance was needed.

33. At its face-to-face meeting, AHTEG considered the views and recommendations emerging from the Online Forum and the results of the survey of indicators of the Strategic Plan, in particular the needs and gaps identified by the Parties with regard to guidance on specific aspects of risk assessment of LMOs.

34. AHTEG takes the view that further development of guidance on additional specific topics of risk assessment is still needed. AHTEG therefore recommended that the mandates of the Online Forum and AHTEG be extended beyond the seventh meeting of the Parties, with revised terms of reference to include the development of further guidance on specific topics of risk assessment.

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[5] The Strategic Plan for implementation of the Protocol is available at http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/issues/cpb_stplan.shtml.

35. AHTEG also recommended the development of further guidance on the following topics prioritized on the basis of the needs indicated by the Parties with a view to moving towards operational objectives 1.3 and 1.4 of the Strategic Plan and its outcomes:

(a) Risk assessment of living modified organisms introduced in centres of origin and genetic diversity;

(b) Risk assessment of living modified microorganisms and viruses;

(c) Risk assessment of living modified fish.

36. In addition to the three prioritized topics above, AHTEG also identified the following list of topics for future consideration, if and when appropriate:[6]

(a) Risk assessment of living modified animals;

(b) Risk assessment of LM insects;

(c) Risk assessment of living modified organisms created through use of dsRNA techniques, engineered to produce dsRNA or exposed to dsRNA;

(d) Risk assessment of living modified organisms containing RNAi;

(e) Risk assessment of living modified organisms produced through cisgenetics;

(f) Risk assessment of living modified organisms that produce pharmaceutical and industrial products;

(g) Risk assessment of nutritionally altered living modified plant;

(h) Risk assessment of living modified organisms produced through synthetic biology;

(i) Risk assessment and management of LMOs intended for introduction into unmanaged ecosystems;

(j) Co-existence between LMOs and non-LMOs in the context of small scale farming;

(k) Guidance on integrating human health into the environmental risk assessment;

(l) Guidance on health impacts of LMOs and herbicides that are part of the technology package that accompanies them;

(m) Guidance on the synergistic impacts of different herbicides that are part of the technology package that accompanies certain LMOs.

37. At its eighteenth meeting, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in its deliberations on new and emerging issues, considered (a) the potential positive and negative impacts of components, organisms and products resulting from synthetic biology techniques on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and (b) possible gaps and overlaps with the applicable provisions of the Convention, its protocols and other relevant agreements related to such components, organisms and products.

38. In its recommendations on the issue of synthetic biology, the Subsidiary Body noted that:[7]

(a) Synthetic biology may be understood to involve various techniques, organisms and components that result in a range of products, living and non-living, and of differing characteristics; however, there is lack of common understanding of the differences between synthetic biology and conventional genetic engineering;

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[6] The topics listed are not ranked in any particular order and include topics that were originally in documents UNEP/CBD/BS/AHTEG-RA&RM/5/1/Add.1 and UNEP/CBD/BS/AHTEG-RA&RM/5/5, noting that some topics were removed from the original lists as they are already being addressed by other fora under the Protocol.

[7] See UNEP/CBD/COP/12/3, Annex, recommendation XVIII/7.

(b) Some of these techniques, organisms and components have resulted in commercial products and industrial processes, others are expected to in the near-term, while yet others may do so in the longer-term or are speculative;

(c) There are intended benefits from research and from current and near-term commercial, industrial applications and products of synthetic biology but these are currently poorly understood;

(d) There are also risks to biological diversity and human livelihoods associated with the components, organisms and products resulting from synthetic biology techniques but these are currently poorly understood;

(e) Existing regulations that may be relevant to synthetic biology techniques and the components, organisms and products resulting from them do not form a coherent and comprehensive international framework; nevertheless, the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety may provide a regulatory platform for some aspects;

(f) There are some existing national and international regulatory regimes which provide useful models to regulate the components, organisms and products resulting from synthetic biology but there is no comprehensive international regulatory regime;

39. Furthermore, the Subsidiary requested the Executive Secretary:

(a) To provide additional opportunities for peer-review of the information documents on synthetic biology and its potential impacts on biodiversity and on the possible gaps and overlaps with the Convention, its Protocols and other relevant agreements and then to present the updated documents prior to the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties;[8]

(b) To bring its recommendations to the attention of the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and its Bureau.

40. In its consideration of the agenda item on risk assessment and risk management, the COP-MOP may take into account the recommendations of both the AHTEG and SBSTTA when considering the development of further guidance on specific aspects of risk assessment.

VI. IDENTIFICATION OF LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS OR SPECIFIC TRAITS THAT (A) MAY HAVE OR (B) ARE NOT LIKELY TO HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS

41. In annex II to its decision BS-V/16, the COP-MOP included, in the work plan for its seventh meeting, consideration of the modalities for cooperation and guidance in identifying living modified organisms or specific traits that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health.

42. In decision BS-VI/12, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol requested the Executive Secretary to create sections in the Biosafety Clearing-House for the submission and easy retrieval of information on the identification of living modified organisms or specific traits that (a) may have or (b) are not likely to have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health.

43. The Secretariat established a mechanism consisting of offline and online common formats to enable the submission of such information by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations.

44. Since the last meeting of the COP-MOP, only one submission was made by an organization, the African Centre for Biosafety, on the identification of LMOs or specific traits that may have adverse effects.

45. All submissions received up to now, including those submitted to the COP-MOP at its fifth and sixth meetings, were compiled for easy retrieval through the BCH at http://bch.cbd.int/protocol/cpb_art15/LMOs_traits.shtml.

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[8] UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/18/INF/3 and INF/4.

46. In its deliberations on this issue and in accordance with the work plan for its seventh meeting, the COP-MOP may wish to consider possible modalities for cooperation and the development of guidance for identifying living modified organisms or specific traits that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health.

VII. SUGGESTED ELEMENTS FOR A DRAFT DECISION

47. Taking into account the above information, and on the basis of the recommendations made by the Online Forum and the AHTEG on Risk Assessment and Risk Management, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol may wish to:

Regarding the Guidance on Risk Assessment of Living Modified Organisms

(a) Endorse the Guidance, and support for its use and application by Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations, in its current version, in actual cases of risk assessment and as a tool for capacity-building activities in risk assessment;

(b) Add questions regarding the use of the Guidance into the format of the third National Report on the implementation of the Protocol including suggestions for possible improvements;

(c) Establish a mechanism for updating the Guidance, in accordance with paragraph 19(c) above, with a view to having an updated version of the Guidance by the ninth meeting of the COP-MOP and taking into account the notion that the Guidance is intended to be a "living document";

(d) Improve the mechanism established in paragraph 6 of decision BS-VI/12 for updating background documents to the Guidance in accordance with paragraph 22 above;

(e) Consideration, at its ninth meeting, of the need for a medium or long-term mechanism for future updates of the Guidance;

Regarding capacity-building in risk assessment

(f) Endorse the package that aligns the Guidance and Manual as a useful online tool for, *inter alia*, capacity building in risk assessment;

(g) Request the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of funds, to:

(i) Conduct capacity-building activities in risk assessment using the aligned package to facilitate the use and implementation of the Guidance, in its current version;

(ii) Develop an interactive learning tool based on the aligned package, and make it available through the Biosafety Clearing-House in all United Nations languages with the view to developing a more cost-effective way for delivering training on risk assessment;

(h) Request the Global Environmental Facility and invite Parties, other Governments and international organizations to provide funds and in-kind assistance to implement the capacity-building activities included in these recommendations, as appropriate;

Regarding the development of further guidance on specific aspects of risk assessment

(i) Extend the mandate of the Open-ended Online Expert Forum on Risk Assessment and Risk Management and the AHTEG on Risk Assessment and Risk Management to work primarily online, with revised terms of reference, for the development of further guidance on the following topics prioritized on the basis of the needs indicated by the Parties with a view to moving towards operational objectives 1.3 and 1.4 of the Strategic Plan and its outcomes:

(i) Risk assessment of living modified organisms introduced in centres of origin and genetic diversity;

(ii) Risk assessment of living modified microorganisms and viruses;

(iii) Risk assessment of living modified fish;

(j) Request the Executive Secretary to continue facilitating the work of the Online Forum and the AHTEG in accordance with the modalities of work established in decision BS-VI/12;

Regarding the identification of living modified organisms or specific traits that (i) may have or (ii) are not likely to have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health

(k) Welcome the creation of sections in the Biosafety Clearing-House where information can be submitted and retrieved regarding living modified organisms or specific traits that may have or that are not likely to have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health;

(l) Urge Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to continue submitting, through the Biosafety-Clearing House, scientific information that may assist in the identification of such living modified organisms or specific traits;

(m) Request AHTEG to consider whether additional guidance is needed in the context of Operational Objective 1.4 of the Strategic Plan of the Cartagena Protocol, i.e. “LMOs or traits that may have adverse effects: To develop modalities for cooperation and guidance in identifying LMOs or specific traits that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health”.

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